The Message *of* Song

William Grey Maxwell

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By William Grey Maxwell

With Illustrative Poems selected by the Author

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TO MY MOTHER

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The Message *of* Song

RELIGION and law have been supreme forces of impulse and restraint in human history. Both had their origin in the soul's necessities. But religion has too often become set in creeds, while law, through the principles of equity, has steadily enlarged her domain, and become beautiful in power as the ultimate regulator of conduct. Law is equal to all material purposes inclusive of marking the confines of creed. But poetry supersedes both law and religion. Anchored within the veil she is sublime in inspiration, drawing from the eternal Mind sustenance and beauty.

Creeds in themselves are not expansive. They should be written in the wordless language of music, which lifts the spirit to more beautiful life through aspiration. A religion, thus heralded, no science could despoil, for as this widens her boundaries the other still pierces the unknown beyond. True religion, which is in reality the poetic, can not be chained by creeds and live. These are the bonds that stifle. Religion, like music, must utter her message untramelled, and this will be the more true and fruitful when pervasive as the air we breathe. The history of creeds has been a tale of turmoil, of wasted

spirit energy, a blighting of holiness, for holiness is not separation from the world, but an alliance with the Lord who pervades all, a helping of Him to render the clay of life subservient to Beauty.

The discoveries in physical and mental laws may aid in securing the higher purposes of life, but in this way only are they of spiritual use. To fail of the ulterior aim, the dominion of Soul, is after all but a groping in the darkness. Alliance with the primal Spirit is the only true method of high warfare through all the universe, for then the inner forces become available and aid in the supreme design; peace of spirit, a revelling in the Beautiful, an existence which any God would surely deem worthy.

Law and morals help us in clearing a way for the nobler thought. But they do no more. If we have the true poetic concept these become superseded in the personal existence—and *functus officio* when this higher pilot is at the wheel.

Poetry, religion, art have birth in the ceaseless yearning for a resting place in universal Soul. The water that seeks the lake or ocean, while finding momentary quiet in these, still holds within itself the potency of further wandering. The obstructions of artifice do indeed impede and delay, but they do not destroy this potency: and when the barriers fall the onrush follows. And so the potency of spirit, lured from its home in the Deep, urges ever the return. And though creeds, and laws and forces of earth may impede, yet this restless yearning, this soul potency, ever impels back to the natal Source.

Cogito, ergo sum (I think, therefore I am) would seem to be a sane basis for a philosophical structure. But a wider conclusion follows. *I think, therefore a thinking Power exists.* And this is the true message of Song, guiding us to

> That God, which ever lives and loves
> One God, one law, one element
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

Polytheism was the world's childhood. Her maturer spiritual life is pantheistic, the belief in a supreme Power working everywhere, to express himself in the Beautiful. And why *working?* This Power is clearly the most masterful of poets, for he has created highest beauty in both thought and form. Yet law is an element of him which cannot be evaded. He may not make twice two other than four, nor the less to contain the greater. He may not turn time back, nor stay man's journey into the shadows of eternity. Nor can he give to man freedom of volition with certainty of holiness. Law is dominant of him and all his works. The supreme lawyer, therefore, is he who knows the divine code. And the wisely happy man is he who harmonizes with it: for in this way he shall be able to aid in the splendid work of evolution into spiritual beatitude, a labor, which in the nature of things must be eternal, though ever attended by the radiance of Beauty.

That there exists a moral obligation to do the right seems to be an innate principle. What *is* right

is a question involving many elements, and may be discovered by both thought and intuition. Here the true poet becomes indeed a *creator*, for the ardor of his conceptions, unaided by process of reasoning, flames a pathway into the domain of spirit, illuminating all, and bringing in its trail a vital peace, a sentient knowledge, a potent being.

Wine, religion, and love have ushered into retreats of the insane, in equal portions, two-thirds of all their inmates: a royal band of pilgrims, surely, that might well be journeying to the shrine of the Saint. And this sombre bit of statistics serves to teach us two lessons: first, that some mysterious soul energy works through the mechanism of brain, more or less perfectly as this responds to the music of life, like a material medium which may fade and decay; and second, these marvellous necromancers, love, religion, and wine, weaving the dull things of existence into romance, give us a vision of the true ecstasy, and reveal the vast realm of Beauty, the Soul's domain. We should care for the culture of the brain, that receiving instrument of rapturous sound, and regard the mere toil of existence as of time only. And so, like the siphon which, cleared of the impeding air may set flowing waters otherwise inaccessible, these stimulated flights from earth, revealing to us a world more beautiful, may set moving the flow of song from hence, the only sane delirium in all earth's barrenness.

And these sad statistics of the insane suggest many spiritual queries. The decay or absence of

mental faculties because of brain deficiency, and their return to normal action when the nerve organism becomes sound, would seem to indicate some power *beyond*, which works *through* these physical media, an elusive and eternal force, indeed, which can flit to and fro in harmony with the structure and condition of the brain. The *material* sustenance remains the same. How then may mental faculties depart and return? The poet alone seems to solve this question, not by logical process, but by a divine intuition. He does not philosophize. He simply sings that

> All are but parts of one stupendous whole
> Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

Song builds a spiritual creed unfettered. The limitless faith in the Power that inspires, in wood, in sky, in flower, and in man—that evolves the soulful melodies of lark and nightingale, the mighty music of the ocean's roar, or paints the lily and the rose. No creed in anything but universals can stir the world, " or wake to ecstasy the living lyre." Belief in man's religious fabrications now wanes like a groping moment in the eternity of Truth, and soon must pass away. Supernatural revelation, so-called, is meaningless. If it is within the scope of man's intelligence to comprehend Truth when revealed, there must also reside within his nature the potency of its discovery.

When the delicate mechanism of hearing is clogged by the ravages of disease or physical defect,

the waves of sound will not arouse the nerve sentinels of the brain, and no voice penetrates. And so when this wondrous enginery of the soul itself is deadened by lust or sloth the waves of spiritual song, floating forever across the universe, knock in vain at the spirit's portal. There is no response. All is death within. Yet a Beethoven whose *mortal* ear was closed to sound, but whose mechanism of brain rang true, could still hear the music of ethereal space, the harmonies of a divine orchestra.

To be a poet does not demand setting one's thoughts to measure. Poetry is the vast ocean of spiritual Beauty and he who bathes in this must indeed partake of inspiration, whether he utters or is silent. To sing is the talent, to *feel* is the substance itself. The spirit of Song may well exclaim, "Before the world was, I am." Jesus, himself, who had no technical knowledge of metrical laws, was a master Poet. He heard well the divine message in all its truth and beauty. His sweet Song has thrilled the ages—so potent has it been even where imprisoned in creeds—and thus forced to languish behind the bars. Here are some of this Seer's sonnets:

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The kingdom of God is within you.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Not here nor at Jerusalem. They that worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

The life of Jesus was itself a beautiful poem, and brought to the world the eternal message of Song that all life is a manifestation of divine energy, seeking expression in a material world. This conception of life as the expression of Soul through bodily forms militates against the destruction of such media of this energy, striving to reveal itself. Such destruction when necessary to a worthier existence may find excuse, though, perhaps, not justification. But what is to be said of that brand of mental organism which wins *pleasure* in these ravages for *any* purpose?

Far more innately vicious must be the species of brain in which *any* satisfaction can supervene upon the mere wanton removal from life of other lives. Can such a brain mechanism respond to true courage?

Very likely in the lonely wilderness, far from the eyes of man, such spirits would cower in any equal contest with the mute denizens of Nature's solitudes. And *everywhere* they would hesitate to enter a battle where the weapons are keenly even.

The Almighty must have moments of sorrow when he contemplates that after long cycles of living and decay, after all efforts to produce Man, there still cling to the clay of his mechanism primeval obstructions that impede the *nobler efforts and accomplishments* of Soul.

In the collection from *Shakespeare's Sonnets* it clearly appears that the poet sang of the all-animating Spirit, showing by varied fancies the uniform method and result of marriage with the creative Soul in the generating and inspiration of eternal Beauty. Nature has provided for the production of physical offspring, through marriage of the body. And so, through a nobler love, the Creator has arranged for the generating of children of the Soul, his own ideal progeny, music, poetry, religion. This collection of songs is made not only to illumine the passing hour, and bring a transient joy, happy as that purpose would be. It is hoped that the Message of Song will help us to listen more effectively to the music of the boundless spirit Deep forever beating upon the shores of life, and perhaps that wordless singing will tell us, more vividly than all philosophers and creeds, that Divine life is everywhere, that it is limited in manifestation by the obstructions of clay alone. And that in some mysteri-

ous way each lesser soul may aid in breaking down these barriers, and emerge into the light and freedom of his proper element where, " Through the deep caves of thought he may hear a voice that sings "—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Selected Poems

Overture

For we believe the poets, it is they
Who utter wisdom from the central deep,
And, listening to the inner flow of things,
Speak to the world out of eternity.

LOWELL

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep
Too full for sound and foam.
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark!

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

TENNYSON

Selected Poems

From Shakespeare's Sonnets

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed:
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:—
  So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XXIX

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope
Featured like him, like him with friends possess't,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remembered, such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's stateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I now pay as if not paid before:
But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

XXXI

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
And there reigns love, and all love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought buried,
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear-religious love stolen from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things removed, that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
That due of many now is thine alone:
Their images I loved I view in thee,
And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.

XLII

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly:
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her;
And for my sake even so doth she love me,
Suffering her friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross
But here's the joy,—my friend and I are one;
Sweet flattery!—then she loves but me alone.

LII

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming in the long years set,
Like stories of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest.
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Bless'd are you, whose worthiness gives scope.
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

LIII

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you;
On Helen's cheek all cut of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring, and foison of the year;
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear;
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part.
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIV

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When Summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade:
Die to themselves, Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made;
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive the powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory,
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth: your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity.
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LVI

Sweet love renew thy force: be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpened in his former might:
So, love, be thou: although to-day those fill
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fulness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted—new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view:
Or call it Winter, which, being full of care,
Makes Summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare.

LVII

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose.
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of naught
Save, where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

LVIII

That god forbid that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th' account of hours crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O, let me suffer, being at your beck
Th' imprisoned absence of your liberty:
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong,
That you yourself may privilege your time:
Do what you will, to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

LIX

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which, laboring for invention, bear amiss
The second burden of a former child!
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the Sun.
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done!
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we're mended, or whe'r better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

LX

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;
Feeds on the rareties of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:—
And yet, to times in hope, my verse shall stand
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXI

Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou sendst from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

LXII

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account;
And so myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But, when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Bated and dropped with tann'd antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read:
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee myself that for myself I praise
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

LXIV

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced,
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age,
When sometime lofty towers I see downrazed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage.
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store,
When I have seen such interchange of state
And state itself confounded to decay,
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my Love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose,
But seeks to have that which it fears to lose—

LXV

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall Beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! Where alack!
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
Or who his spoil of Beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might
That in black ink my Love may still shine bright.

LXIX

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend;
All tongues, the voice of souls give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend,
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd:
But those same tongues, that give thee so thine own.
In other accents do this praise confound
By seeing further than the eye hath shown,
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess. They measure by thy deeds:
Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind.
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The solve is this, that thou dost common grow.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the West;
Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all the rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long:

LXXIV

But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away.
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So, then, thou hast but lost the dregs of life.
The prey of worms, my body being dead:
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife.
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

LXXV

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet-seasoned showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As twixt a miser and his wealth is found;
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure;
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure;
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
And by-and-by clean starved for a look;
Possessing or pursuing no delight
Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

LXXVI

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and whence they did proceed?
O, know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument:
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the Sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVIII

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added features to the learned's wing,
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:
In others works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be:
  But thou art all my art, and dost advance
  As high as learning my rude ignorance.

LXXXI

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die;
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read:
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of the world are dead:
  You still shall live—such virtue hath my pen—
  Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths
    of men.

LXXXVII

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me to whom thou gav'st it else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter;
In sleep, a king; but waking, no such matter.

XCVII

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeing year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time removed was summer time:
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime
Like widowed wombs after their lord's decease;
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans, and unfathered fruit:
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And thou away, the very birds are mute:
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

XCVIII

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odor and in hue,
Could make me any Summer's story tell,
Or from that proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose:
They were but fleeting figures of delight
Drawn after you; you, pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it Winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play:

XCIX

The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed,
The lily I condemned for thy hand;
And buds of marjorum had stolen thy hair:
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,
And to his robbery had annexed thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
But sweet or color it had stolen from thee.

C

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song.
Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent:
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument,
Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there:
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despised everywhere.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life:
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

CI

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends:
So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
Make answer, Muse, wilt thou not haply say.
Truth needs no color, with his color fixed:
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;
But best is best, if never intermixed?
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so: for't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be praised of ages yet to be.
Thou do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CII

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming:
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the Spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in Summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the Summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night.
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

CIV

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For, as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still, three Winters cold
Have from the forests shook. Three Summers' pride,
Three beauteous Springs to yellow Autumn turn'd
In process of the seasons I have seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights;
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have exprest
Ev'n such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all, you prefiguring;
And for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVIII

What's in the brain, that ink may character,
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy: but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same:
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page:
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

CIX

O never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify:
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love; if I have ranged,
Like him that travels, I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

CX

Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view.
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new;
Most true it is that I have looked on truth
Askance and strangely: but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now all is done, save what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confined.
Then give me welcome, next my Heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most, most loving breast.

CXII

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'ergreen my bad, my good allow?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue:
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes right or wrong,
In so profound abyss I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stoppèd are
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
That all the world besides methinks are dead.

CXV

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer:
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But,—reckoning Time, whose millioned accidents
Creep in 'twixt rows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to th' course of altering things:—
Alas, why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, *Now I love you best,*
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe: then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:—
O no! it is an ever fixed mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom:—
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXLVI

Poor Soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Foiled by those rebel powers that thee array.
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer death.
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then Soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss
And let that pine to aggravate thy store:
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross:
Within be fed, without be rich no more:—
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

From The "Tempest"

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip bell I lie:
There I crouch when owls do cry:
On the bat's wing I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough!

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to live with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat—
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
  Here shall he see
      No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live in the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets:—
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
  Here shall he see
      No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Full fathoms five thy father lies:
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change,
Into something rich and strange,
Sea nymphs hourly sing his knell:
Hark! now I hear them,—
Ding, dong, bell.

SHAKESPEARE

Beyond The Veil

They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit lingering here:
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear:—

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Of those faint beams in which this hill is drest,
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days:
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope! and high Humility,
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have shew'd them me,
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the just,
Shining no where, but in the dark:
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest, may
know
At first sight, if the bird be flown:
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep;
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted
themes
And into glory peep.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the world a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed—

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their nobler rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind:

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray:
Along the cool, sequestr'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful clay,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires:
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate:
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate:—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dew away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawns, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn;"

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown,
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

THOMAS GRAY

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn:
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view
A spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty:
A countenance in which did meet,
Sweet records, promises as sweet:
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eyes serene
The very pulse of the machine:
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death.
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;

And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

WORDSWORTH

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove:
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be:
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

WORDSWORTH

Three years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This Child I to myself will take:
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,

In earth and heaven, in glade in bower,
Shall feel an ever seeing power
To kindle and restrain.

"She shall be sportive as a fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And her's shall be the breathing balm.
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend:
Nor shall she fail to see
Ev'n in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell:
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
  She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene:
  The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

WORDSWORTH

Ode To Duty

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them: who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around
them cast.

Serene will be our days, and bright
And happy will our nature be
When love is our unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Ev'n now, who, not unwisely bold,

Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferr'd
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control,
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name;
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of Truth thy Bondman let me live.

WORDSWORTH

A Lesson

There is a flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks like many more from cold and rain,
And the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm
In close self-shelter, like a thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I past,
And recognized it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped and said, with inly-muttered voice
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold;
This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay:
Stiff in its members, wither'd, changed of hue,"—
And in my spleen, I smiled that it was gray.

To be a prodigal's favorite—then, worse truth,
A miser's pensioner—behold our lot!
O man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

WORDSWORTH

England and Switzerland

Two voices are there: one is of the Sea,
  One of the Mountains; each a mighty voice:
  In both from age to age thou did'st rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!

There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
  Thou fought'st against him,—but hast vainly striven:
  Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmur's heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left—
  For high souled Maid, what sorrow would it be,

That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
  And neither awful Voice be heard by Thee!

WORDSWORTH

The Green Linnet

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
  Of spring's unclouded weather.
In this sequester'd nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And flowers and birds once more to greet,
  My last year's friends to-gether.

One have I mark'd, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
  In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array
Presiding Spirit here to-day
Dost lead the revels of the May;
  And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
  Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the air
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
  Thyself, thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstacies
  Yet seeming still to hover:
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings
  That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives—
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
  Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mock'd and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
  While fluttering in the bushes.

WORDSWORTH

To The Cuckoo

O blithe new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O cuckoo! shall I call the Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy two-fold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery:

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listen'd to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
  Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
  Still long'd for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet:
  Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
  That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
  Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place,
  That is fit home for Thee!

WORDSWORTH

The World is too much with us; late or soon,
  Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
  Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
  The winds that will be howling at all hours
  And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not, Great Power! I'd rather be
  A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

  Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn:
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
  Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WORDSWORTH

To The Skylark

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
  Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
  Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond
  Mount, darling warbler!—that love-prompted strain
'Twixt thee and thine a never failing bond—
  Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood:
  A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
  Of harmony, with instinct more divine:
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

WORDSWORTH

The Reaper

Behold her, single in the field.
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and bends the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
  As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
  And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listen'd, motionless and still:
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

WORDSWORTH

The Daffodils

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
  Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A Poet could not but be gay
  In such a jocund company!
I gazed,—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon the inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude:
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WORDSWORTH

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee
  For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
  Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit and play with similes.
Loose types of things through all degrees,
  Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame
As is the humour of the game,
  While I am gazing.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy.
That thought comes next—and instantly
  The freak is over.
The shape will vanish, and behold!
A silver shield with boss of gold
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
  In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star,
Not quite so fair as many are
    In heaven above thee!

Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee!

Sweet Flower! for by that name at last
When all my reveries are past
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent Creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

WORDSWORTH

By The Sea

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquility;

The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we knew it not.

WORDSWORTH

To Sleep

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by
  One after one: the sound of rain, and bees
  Murmuring: the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;

I've thought of all by turns, and yet to lie
  Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
  Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees,
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
  And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:

Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
  Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

WORDSWORTH

The Inner Vision

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path there be or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon:

Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.

If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way—
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,—
The mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

WORDSWORTH

Written in Early Spring

I heard a thousand blended notes
  While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
  Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair Works did Nature link
  The human soul that through me ran:
And much it grieved my heart to think
  What Man has made of Man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
  The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
  Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd,
  Their thoughts I cannot measure,—
But the least motion which they made
  It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
  To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
  That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What Man has made of Man?

WORDSWORTH

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die!
The child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

WORDSWORTH

Ruth:

Or The Influences of Nature

When Ruth was left half desolate
Her father took another mate;
  And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
  In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
  Like sounds of winds and floods:
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
  An infant of the woods.

Beneath the father's roof, alone
She seem'd to live: her thoughts her own;
  Herself her own delight:
Pleased with herself, nor sad nor gay;
And passing thus the live-long day,
  She grew to woman's height.

There came a youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore
  With splendid feathers drest;

He brought them from the Cherokees:
The feathers nodded in the breeze
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spoke the English tongue
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek,
In finest tones the youth could speak:
While he was but a boy
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought;
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear:
Such tales as, told to any maid
By such a youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls, a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spoke of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues:
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;
Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade

To wander with an easy mind,
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So pass'd in quiet bliss:
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love,
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!"—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer!

"And now as fitting is and right
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That, on those lonesome floods
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And with his dancing crest
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roam'd about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart

A kindred impulse, seem'd allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of Nature wrought,—
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers:
The breezes their own languor lent:
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favored bowers.

Yet in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions link'd to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known:
Deliberately and undeceived
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had woo'd the maiden, day and night,
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a maid
Whose heart with so much nature play'd—
So kind and so forlorn?

Sometimes most earnestly he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain
Encompass'd me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had cross'd the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurl'd
To music suddenly:
I look'd upon those hills and plains,
And seem'd as if let loose from chains
To live at liberty!

"No more of this—for now, by thee,
Dear Ruth! more happily set free,
With nobler zeal I burn:
My soul from darkness is released
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return!

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirr'd him now no more:

New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wish'd to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore:
But when they thither came, the youth
Deserted his poor bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had
That she in half a year was mad
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May,
They all were with her in her cell;
And a dear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from the prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought:
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master current of her brain
  Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
  Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
  And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still,
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
  Which had been done to her.

A barn her winter bed supplies:
But, till the warmth of Summer skies
  And Summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
  And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day
  Be broken down and old.
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
  From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food
She from her dwelling in the wood
  Repairs to a road-side:

And there she begs at one steep place,
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute
Or thrown away: but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I too, have pass'd her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourn'd—
A young and happy child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth! in hallow'd mould
Thy corpse shall buried be:
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

WORDSWORTH

The Trosachs

There's not a nook within this solemn Pass
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Wither'd at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy guest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast.
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest.

WORDSWORTH

Ode on Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore:—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose:
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare:
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound

To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep:—
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep.
And all the earth is gay:
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday:—
Thou child of joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make: I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee:
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel,—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May morning:
And the children are culling
On every side
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy.

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended:
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own:
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind

And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art:
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral:
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity:

Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by:
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise:
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised;
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Aye yet the fountain light of all our day,
Aye yet a master-light of all our seeing:
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither:
Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then, sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower:
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind:
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering:
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of heart I feel your might:
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway:
I love the brooks which down their channels fret
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet:
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from my eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won
Thanks to the human heart by which we live
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WORDSWORTH

The Lark

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!
Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud;
Love gives it energy—love gave it birth!
Where on thy dewy wing—
Where art thou journeying,
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day:
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing away!
Then when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

James Hogg

How sweet the answer Echo makes
To Music at night
When, roused by lute or horn, she wakes.
And far away o'er lawn and lakes
Goes answering light!

Yet love hath echoes truer far
And far more sweet
Then e'er, beneath the moonlight's star,
Of horn or lute or soft guitar
The songs repeat.

'Tis when the sigh,—in youth sincere
And only then,
The sigh that's breathed for one to hear—
Is by that one, that only Dear
Breathed back again.

MOORE

The Light of Other Days

Oft in the stilly night
  Ere slumber's chain has bound me.
Fond Memory brings the light
  Of other days around me:
    The smiles, the tears
    Of boyhood years.
The words of love then spoken;
    The eyes that shone,
    Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus in the stilly night
  Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
  Of other days around me.

When I remember all
  The friends so link'd together
I've seen around me fall
  Like leaves in wintry weather,
    I feel like one
    Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
    Whose lights are fled
    Whose garlands dead

And all but he departed!
Thus in the stilly night
  Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
  Of other days around me.

MOORE

The Grasshopper and Cricket

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June—
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass!
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine: both, though small are strong
At your dear hearts: and both seem given to earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, mirth.

LEIGH HUNT

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee:
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me;
When, as if its sounds were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:
And the midnight moon is wearing
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee
To listen and adore thee:
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

BYRON

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in the aspect of her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
And half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress
Or softly lightens o'er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow
But tell of days in goodness spent,—
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.

BYRON

Elegy on Thyrza

And thou art dead, as young and fair
  As aught of mortal birth:
And forms so soft and charms so rare
  Too soon returned to Earth!
Though earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
  In carelessness or mirth.
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low
  Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow
  So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
  Like common earth can rot:
To me there needs no stone to tell
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last,
  As fervently as thou
Who didst not change through all the past
  And canst not alter now.

The love where Death has set his seal
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
  Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
  The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lours,
  Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep:
  Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away
I might have watched through long decay.

The flower in ripened bloom unmatch'd
  Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatched,
  The leaves must drop away.
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
  Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
  To see thy beauties fade;
The night that followed such a morn
  Had worn a deeper shade;
Thy day without a cloud hath past,

And thou wert lovely to the last,
  Extinguished, not decayed;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
  My tears might well be shed
To think I was not near, to keep
  One vigil o'er thy bed:
To gaze how fondly! on thy face.
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
  Uphold thy drooping head:
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
  Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain
  Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
  Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.

BYRON

On The Castle of Chillon

Eternal spirit of the changeless Mind!
  Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
  For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of Thee alone can find;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,
  To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
  Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place
  And thy sad floor an altar, for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
  Worn as if thy cold pavement were a sod.
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
  For they appeal from tyranny to God.

BYRON

Youth and Age

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never set again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down:
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth
distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their
former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret
wreathe,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and
gray beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many a
vanish'd scene,—
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish
though they be,
So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would
flow to me!

BYRON

To The Night

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray
Star—inwrought:
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day.
Kiss her until she be wearied out:
Then wander o'er city and sea and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sigh'd for thee:
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turn'd to his rest
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sigh'd for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmur'd like a noon-tide bee
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied
No—not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled:
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight.
Come soon; soon!

SHELLEY

Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples

The sun is warm, the sky is clear
  The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains near
  The purple noon's transparent might:
  The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds:
  Like many a voice of one delight—
The winds', the birds', the ocean floods'—
  The city's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor
  With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
  Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
  I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
  Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion—
  How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
  Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content, surpassing wealth,

The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure;
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure:
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild
Even as the winds and waters are:
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,—
Till death-like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

SHELLEY

To a Skylark

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire,
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight:
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not:
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a high born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view.

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal
Or triumphal chaunt
Match'd with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind, what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Langor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety,

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught:
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow.
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

SHELLEY

Ozymandias of Egypt

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that the sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on those lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

SHELLEY

The Invitation

Best and brightest, come away—
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which like thee, to those in sorrow
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon morn
To hoar February born;
Bending from heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all the fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strew'd flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not express

Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.

Radiant Sister of the Day
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves
Of sapless green, and ivy dress,
Round stems that never kiss the sun:
Where the lawns and pastures be
And the sandhills of the sea:
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers and violets
Which yet join not scent to hue
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dim and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal Sun.

SHELLEY

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:—
No,—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair Love's ripening breast
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender taken breath,
And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

KEATS

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry
Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain:
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance:
And when I feel, fair Creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the fairy power
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

KEATS

Ode To a Nightingale

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk.
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
  That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
    In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
  Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
  Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
  Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South.
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
  With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
    And purple-stained mouth:
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
  And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
  What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
  Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night.
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs.
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
While hawthorne, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child.
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still would'st thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn:
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! Adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next alley glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

KEATS

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born.
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon
Nor brought too long a day:
But now I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
The roses red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups—
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing:
My spirit flew in feathers then
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high:
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;

It was a childish ignorance,
  But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
  Than when I was a boy.

HOOD

From In Memoriam*

Thou seemed human and divine,
  The highest, holiest manhood Thou—
  Our wills are ours we know not how:
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

Our little systems have their day:
  They have their day and cease to be:
  They are but broken lights of Thee.
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know:
  For knowledge is of things we see;
  And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

I held it truth, with him who sings
  To one clear harp in divers tones,
  That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
  These leaves that redden to the fall;
  And in my heart if calm at all,
If any calm a calm despair.

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* By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

I hold it true whate'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.

(Of Lazarus)

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed:
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of the Evangelist.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure:
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views:
Nor thou with shadowed hints confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

My own dim life should teach me this:
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws
To drop headforemost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

[The above thoughts are such]
Which he may read that binds the sheaf.
Or builds the house, or digs the grave:
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance:
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

Wild bird, whose warble liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix
O tell me where the passions meet.

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe
I cannot all command the strings:
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out:
There lives more faith in honest doubt
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
  Be sundered in the night of fear:
  Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm.

That God, which ever lives and loves,
  One God, one law, one element,
  And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

TENNYSON

Spring*

Dip down upon the northern shore,
  O sweet new year, delaying long:
  Thou doest expectant nature wrong,
Delaying long: delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons
  Thy sweetness from its proper place?
  Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer noons?

Bring orchis, bring the fig-glove spire,
  The little speedwell's darling blue,
  Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnum, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new year, delaying long,
  Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
  That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
  Now burgeons every maze of quick
  About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the rivulets flow.

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* By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea.

Where now the sea-mew pipes or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives.

From land to land: and in my heart
Spring wakens too: and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

TENNYSON

Willow Song

Willow! in thy breezy moan
I can hear a deeper tone:
Through thy leaves come whispering low
Faint sweet sounds of long ago—
Willow, sighing willow!

Many a mournful tale of old
Heart-sick Love to thee hath told,
Gathering from thy golden bough
Leaves to cool his burning brow—
Willow, sighing willow!

Many a swan-like song to thee
Hath been sung, thou gentle tree;
Many a lute its last lament
Down thy moonlight stream hath sent—
Willow, sighing willow!

Therefore, wave and murmur on,
Sigh for sweet affections gone,
And for tuneful voices fled,
And for Love, whose heart hath bled—
Ever, willow, willow!

Ode

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams—
World losers and world-forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams;
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down—

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth:
For each age is a dream that is dying
Or one that is coming to birth.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

By the Margin of the Great Deep

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam,
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;
I am one with twilight's dream.

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,
Every heart of man is rapt within the mother's heart:
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in vasty quietude,
I am one with their hearts at rest.

From our immemorial joys of hearth and home and love
Stray'd away along the margin of the unknown tide,
All its reach of soundless calm can thrill me far above
Word or touch from the lips beside.

Aye, and deep and deep and deeper let me drink and draw

From the olden fountain more than light or peace
or dream,
Such primæval being as o'erflows the heart with
awe,
Growing one with its silent stream.

"A. E."

The Shepherdess*

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts, she keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep,
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep
Her dreams are innocent at night:
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right:
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

ALICE MEYNELL

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* From Later Poems by Alice Meynell, by permission of John Lane Company.

Genius Loci

Peace, Shepherd, peace! What boots it singing on?
Since long ago grace-giving Phoebus died,
And all the train that loved the stream-bright side
Of the poetic mount with him are gone
Beyond the shores of Styx and Acheron,
In unexplorèd realms of night to hide.
The clouds that strew their shadows far and wide
Are all of Heaven that visits Helicon.
Yet here, where never muse or god did haunt,
Still may some nameless power of Nature stray,
Pleased with the reedy stream's continual chant
And purple pomp of these broad fields in May.
The shepherds meet him where he herds the kine,
And careless pass him whose is the gift divine.

Margaret S. Woods

The generous reader will understand the motives which urge me to include among these collections of Song, *My Prayer*, written by my brother when we were members of the same class at Cornell University, an institution "where" in the words of its founder, "any person can find instruction in any study." This poem, together with its setting in the brief story of my brother's life, seems to illustrate the soul's groping after the inner truths, and the sad battle all must wage in freeing themselves from the blight of creed.

My mother and father left the hills, and lakes, the witching heather, the mists and mysteries of Scotland upon a long wedding journey to America. My father was then twenty-five, my mother fifteen. My mother had drank deep at the springs of Scotch song. Father was of the robust, practical mind, and introduced into America the manufacture of knitted fabrics which has since grown into such vast proportions in the cities of Amsterdam, Cohoes and Troy, and throughout the South and West. My parents were of the Presbyterian faith, but later learned that life may be far greater and better than any word-creed ever evolves. My brother, through the powerful influence of environment, and under pressure of his own spiritual longings, determined to devote himself to some religious ministry. At

Cornell he studied theological doctrine with enthusiasm and patience, but the deeper he went into church history the clearer became the truth that religious creeds are not only based upon fiction, but that their actual working and tendencies have been obnoxious to all free, higher development. And though he was a man of unusual vitality and physical strength, the mental strain and uncertainty of faith shattered his nervous system, and the doctors urged him to enter upon some more active career than metaphysical study would supply. I had the profession of law in view, but as my brother decided to engage in the business my father had followed, and as we were inseparable comrades, I joined him in this.

Our plan provided that each should be free during one-half of the day to pursue his favorite studies, and six months of the year should be devoted by each to travel or other occupation. My brother was familiar with the French and German, and passed his vacations in Scotland and Germany, while I devoted mine to a course at Harvard Law School. This plan resulted most satisfactorily: our business was successful, my brother married, and a daughter came to bless him.

On one occasion we went to New York together for purposes of business, and had arranged to return on the same train. When I came to breakfast at the stated hour I learned that my brother had received a message from his wife who was in Albany with the daughter, asking my brother to meet her there: and so he had taken an earlier train. I left New York

at the hour we had agreed upon—but at Peekskill I found that my brother's train had collided with another, and that my brother had been thrown through the window of the drawing-room car, onto the track, and had been carried to a hotel where the doctors were in attendance. I found him there conscious, but covered with bruises and hopelessly injured. He had every attention, but no nourishment or care seemed to avail, and after two weeks' nursing the doctors summoned me, and announced that I must prepare to lose my brother. I then remained constantly at his bedside. Our talks and our silence alike needed no words to convey that sentiment of closest comradeship which the years had built up. And finally came the intuition which tells of Death's approach. My brother took my hand and said, strangely, too, in the Scotch dialect, "Willie, I'm going to leave you." "Where are you going," I asked, "to Germany?" For I knew he loved that land of song and valor. "No," he answered, "I'm going to *Scotland*." "What message have you to send to your friends?" And in a faint whisper he replied, "Take a sweet song to them all for me." There was no more.

> Here did we stop, and here looked round
> While each into himself descends
> For that last thought of parting friends
> Which is not to be found.

And when my brother spoke of going to Scotland the home of his forefathers—at the very moment

of his spirit's vanishing, what elusive influence prevailed? Was it the mighty spirit power of *nativity*, impelling,

> When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
> Turns again home?

The temple of the soul had crumbled back to the clay out of which it had been moulded, and, as may well be hoped from analogy, the spirit merged into the universal Power.

My Prayer

I pray not for a cloudless life:
  I know full well the soul, like flowers
  Beneath the pelting summer showers,
Is cultured by the storms of strife.

I would not wince to drain the bowl
  Filled to the brim with draughts of woe,
  If it were given me to know
That draughts like these expand the soul.

Nor for the goods of life I crave:
  Its wealth, its pleasures, where are they
  When on that dread, disastrous day,
We reach the threshold of the grave?

This be my prayer: to love the good,
  To do the right, to seek the true,
  To keep eternally in view
The truth of human brotherhood.

To tread the paths the good have trod
  In every age since life began;
  My *Creed*, the brotherhood of man—
My *Trust*, the fatherhood of God!

To sift the creeds of by-gone days,
That Truth her treasures may unroll,
Illume and purify the soul
With her divine, unfading rays.

Nor deem it more a truth when found
Embodied in established creeds,
Nor less when tangled in the weeds
Of doctrines taught on Pagan ground.

For truth is none the more a gem
When uttered by Angelic tongue,
Than when in weaker measures sung
By poor, uncertain sons of men.

O, may I evermore aspire,
Where'er, enchained in error's thrall,
I see a weaker brother fall,
To lift his sinking spirit higher.

To live, that, as the seasons fly,
The close of each recurring year,
May find me higher in the sphere
Of manhood's true nobility.

And whether I shall live again
In some celestial far-off sphere,
Or perish with the fleeting here,
I trust I had not lived in vain.

For though the soul may cease to shine,
The radiant sparks of light it shed,
Will glimmer, when itself is dead,
In other lives through endless time.

JAMES DAVIDSON MAXWELL

To A Waterfowl*

Whither midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong.
As darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seekst thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide.
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

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* Reprinted from Bryant's Complete Poems, by permission of D. Appleton & Company.

And soon that toil shall end:
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows: reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

BRYANT

The Yellow Violet*

When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the blue bird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

As russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mould.
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snowbank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Pole skies, and chilling moisture sip
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

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Oft, in the sunless April day
  Thy early smile has stayed my walk;
But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,
  I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they who climb to wealth forget
  The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them—but I regret
  That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
  Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
  That made the woods of April bright.

BRYANT

The Death of The Flowers*

The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere:
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead:
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread:
The robin and the wren have flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly graves, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain

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* Reprinted from Bryant's Complete Poems, by permission of D. Appleton & Company.

Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.

In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests
cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life
so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young
friend of ours,
So gentle, and so beautiful, should perish with the
flowers.

BRYANT

Voices of The Night*

Pleasant it was when woods were green
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go:

Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping leaves
The shadows hardly move.

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground:
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee
With one continuous sound:—

A slumberous sound, a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,
As of innumerable wings,

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As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
  O'er meadow, lake and stream.

And dreams of that which cannot die,
  Bright visions came to me,
As lapped in thought I used to lie,
And gaze into the summer sky,
When the sailing clouds went by
  Like ships upon the sea:

Dreams that the soul of youth engage
  Ere Fancy has been quelled:
Old legends of the monkish page:
Traditions of the saint and sage.
Tales that have the rime of age,
  And chronicles of eld.

And loving still these quaint old themes,
  Even in the city's throng
I feel the freshness of the streams,
That, crossed by shades and sunny gleams,
Water the green land of dreams,
  The holy land of song.

Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings
  The Spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling birds unfold their wings,
And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
  I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild:
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy:

And ever whispered mild and low,
"Come be a child once more!"
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow;
Oh, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar,—

Into the blithe and breathing air,
Into the solemn wood,
Solemn and silent everywhere!
Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer!
Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue
Of tall and sombrous pines;
Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
And, where the sunshine darted through,
Spread a vapor soft and blue,
In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain,
Like a fast-falling shower
The dream of youth came back again,—

Low lispings of the summer rain,
Dropping on the ripened grain,
As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood! Stay, oh, stay!
Ye were so sweet and wild!
And distant voices seemed to say,
"It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay;
Thou art no more a child!

"The land of song within thee lives,
Watered by living springs;
The lids of Fancy's sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise:
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise;
Its clouds are angel's wings.

"Learn that henceforth thy song shall be,
Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,
Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
The bending heavens below.

"There is a forest where the din
Of iron branches sound!
A mighty river roars between,
And whosoever looks therein
Sees the heavens all black with sin,
Sees not its depths nor bounds.

"Athwart the swinging branches cast,
Soft rays of sunshine pour:
Then comes the fearful wintry blast:
Our hopes, like withered leaves, fall fast:
Pallid lips say, 'It is past!
We can return no more!'

"Look, then, into thine heart, and write!
Yes, into Life's deep stream!
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright
Be these henceforth thy theme."

LONGFELLOW

Footsteps of Angels*

When the hours of Day are numbered,
  And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul that slumbered,
  To a holy, calm delight:

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
  And, like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful firelight
  Dance upon the parlor wall:

Then the forms of the departed
  Enter at the open door:
The beloved, the true hearted,
  Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished
  Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
  Weary with the march of life!

They, the holy ones and weakly,
  Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
  Spoke with us on earth no more!

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And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes on me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

Oh, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died.

LONGFELLOW

A Psalm of Life*

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
  Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
  And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
  And the grave is not its goal:
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
  Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment and not sorrow,
  Is our destined end or way:
But to act, that each to-morrow
  Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long and life is fleeting,
  And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums are beating
  Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle
  In the bivouack of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
  Be a hero in the strife!

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Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead past bury its dead!
Act—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving—still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

LONGFELLOW

The Chambered Nautilus*

This is the ship of pearl which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purple wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
And coral reefs are bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise, to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,
Its irised ceiling rent, its rimless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil:
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

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Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Selections from German Poets

Introduction

THE following selections are given in the original German. Music cannot be adequately translated by words, nor can the written song of a people find an appropriate setting in an alien tongue. The carrying power which goes with the native word and measure will not survive in foreign soil. When we disturb the shaded haunts of the nightingale, song ceases.

Bayard Taylor well knew how " to sing and build the lofty rhyme." He made an able and conscientious rendering of Faust, and yet how frail a craft to bear the precious freightage of the Poet's dream! As an instance of this, I shall quote Mr. Taylor's translation of these splendid lines:—

Und fragst du noch, warum dein Herz
Sich bang in deinem Busen klemnt,
Warum ein unerklärter Schmerz
Dir alle Lebensregung hemmt?
Statt der lebendiger Natur,
Da Gott die Menschen schuf hinein,
Umgiebt in Rauch und Moder nur
Dich Thiergeripp' und Todtenbein.

TAYLOR'S TRANSLATION

And do I ask wherefor my heart
Falters, oppressed with unknown needs?
Why some inexplicable smart

All movement of my life impedes?
Alas! in living Nature's stead,
Where God His human creature set,
In smoke and mould the fleshless dead
And bones of beasts surround me yet!

But lovers of the truly poetic are so keen for its enjoyment that language to them remains no barrier, and they have free access to the beautiful thought of Germany, that mystic land of dreamers who have sung and battled, as true poets always have done, into the higher regions of both spirit and material life.

Morgens Im Walde

Ein sanfter Morgenwind durchzieht
  Des Forstes grüne Hallen,
Hell wirbelt der Vögel muntres Lied,
  Die jungen Birken wallen.

Das Eichhorn schwingt sich von Baum zu Baum,
  Das Reh durchschlüpft die Busche,
Viel hundert Käfer im schatigen Raum
  Erfreun sich der Morgenfrische.

Und wie ich so schreit' in dem lustigen Wald,
  Und alle Bäum' erklingen,
Und um mich her Alles singt und schallt,
  Wie sollt' ich allein nicht singen?

Ich singe mit starkem, freudigem Laut
  Dem, der die Wälder säet,
Der droben die luftige Kuppel gebaut
  Und Wärm' und Kühlung wehet.

EBERT

An Den Mond

Füllest wieder Busch und Thal
Still mit Nebelglanz.
Lösest endlich auch einmal
Meine Seele ganz.

Breitest über mein Gefild'
Lindernd deinen Blick,
Wie des Freundes Auge mild
Ueber mein Geschick.

Jeden Nachklang fühlt mein Herz
Froh und trüber Zeit;
Wandle zwischen Freud' und Schmerz
In der Einsamkeit.

Fliesse, fliesse, lieber Fluss!
Nimmer werd' ich froh!
So verrauschte Scherz und Kuss,
Und die Treue so.

Ich besass es doch einmal,
Was so köstlich ist!
Dass man doch zu seiner Qual
Nimmer es vergisst!

Rausche, Fluss, das Thal entlang,
Ohne Rast und Ruh.
Rausche, flüstre meinem Sang
Melodien zu!

Wenn du in der Winternacht
Wüthend überschwillst,
Oder um die Frühlingspracht
Junger Knospen quillst.

Selig, wer sich vor der Welt
Ohne Hass verschliesst,
Einen Freund am Busen hält,
Und mit dem geniesst;

Was von Menschen nicht gewusst
Oder nicht bedacht,
Durch das Labyrinth der Brust
Wandelt in der Nacht.

GOETHE

Mignon

Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühn,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold Orangan glühn,
Ein sanfer Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?
Kennst du es wohl?
Dahin! Dahin!
Möcht ich mit dir, O mein Geliebter, ziehn.

Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach,
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an;
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, gethan?
Kennst du es wohl?
Dahin! Dahin!
Möcht ich mit dir, O mein Beschützer, ziehn.

Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg?
Das Maulthier sucht in Nebel seinen Weg;
In Höhlen wohnt des Drachen alte Brut;
Es stürtzt der Fels und über ihn die Fluth.
Dahin! Dahin!
Geht unser Weg! O Vater, lass uns ziehn!

GOETHE

From Goethe's Faust

Und fragst du noch, warum dein Herz
  Sich bang in deinem Busen klemmt.
Warum ein unerklärter Schmerz
  Dir alle Lebensregung hemmt?
Statt der lebendigen Natur,
  Da Gott die Menschen schuf hinein,
Umgiebt in Rauch und Moder nur
  Dich Thiergeripp' und Todtenbein.

Allein die Welt! des Menschen Herz und Geist!
  Möcht' Jeglicher doch was davon erkennen,—
Ja, was man so erkennen heisst!
  Wer darf das Kind beim rechten Namen nennen?
Die Wenigen, die was davon erkannt,
  Die thöricht g'nug ihr volles Herz nicht wahrten,
Dem Pöbel ihr Gefühl, ihr Schauen offenbarten,
  Hat man von je gekreuzigt und verbrannt.

Dem Herrlichsten, was auch der Geist empfangen,
  Drängt immer fremd und fremder Stoff sich an:
Wenn wir zum Guten dieser Welt geglangen,
  Dann heisst das Bessre Trug und Wahn.
Die uns das Leben gaben, herrliche Gefühle,
Erstarren in dem irdischen Gewühle.

Wenn Phantasie sich sonst mit kühnem Flug
Und Hoffnungsvoll zum Ewigen erweitert,
So ist ein kleiner Raum ihr nun genug,
Wenn Glück auf Glück im Zeitenstrudel scheitert.

Den Göttern gleich' ich nicht, zu tief ist es gefühlt:
Dem Wurme gleich' ich, der den Staub durchwühlt,
Den, wie er sich im Staube nährend lebt,
Des Wandrers Tritt vernichtet und begräbt.

Doch ist es jedem eingeboren,
Dass sein Gefühl hinauf und vorwärts dringt,
Wenn über uns, im blauen Raum verloren,
Ihr schmetternd Lied die Lerche singt,
Wenn über schroffen Fichten höhen
Der Adler ausgebreitet schwebt,
Und über Flächen, über Seen,
Der Kranich nach der Heimath strebt.

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen
Die eine hält in derber Liebeslust
Sich an die Welt, mit Klammernden Organen:
Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich von Dust,
Zu den Gefildern höher Ahnen,
O giebt es Geister in der Luft,
Die zwischen Erd' und Himmel herrschend weben,
So steiget nieder aus dem goldnen Duft
Und fuhrt mich weg zu neuen, buntern Leben!

Ach wenn in unsrer engen Zelle
Die Lampe freundlich wieder brennt,

Dann wird's in unserm Busen helle,
Im Herzen, das sich selber kennt.
Vernunft fängt wieder an zu sprechen
Und Hoffnung wieder an zu blühen;
Man sehnt sich nach des Lebens Bächen,
Ach! nach des Lebens Quelle hin.

Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir Alles,
Warum ich bat, Du hast mir nicht umsonst
Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet,
Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich,
Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht
Kalt stannenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,
Vergonnest mir, in ihre tiefe Brust
Wie in den Busen eines Freunds zu schauen,
Du führst die Reihe der Lebendigen
Vor mir vorbei und lehrst mich meine Brüder
Im stillen Busch, in Luft und Wasser Kennen.

An Die Natur

Süsse, heilige Natur,
Lass mich gehen auf deiner Spur,
Leite mich an deiner Hand,
Wie ein Kind am Gängelband!

Wenn ich dann ermudet bin,
Sink' ich dir am Busen hin,
Athme süsse Himmelslust
Hangend an der Mutterbrust.

Ach wie wohl ist mir bei dir!
Will dich lieben für und für:
Lass mich gehn auf deiner Spur,
Süsse, heilige Natur!

STOLBERG

Ritter Toggenburg

"Ritter, treue Schwesterliebe,
Widmet euch dies Herz.
Fodert keine andre Liebe,
Denn es macht mir Schmerz:
Ruhig mag ich euch erscheinen,
Ruhig gehen sehn,
Eurer Augen stilles Weinen
Kann ich nicht verstehn."

Und er hört's mit stummen Harme,
Reisst sich blutend los.
Presst sie heftig in die Arme,
Schwingt sich auf sein Ross:
Schickt zu seinen Mannen allen
In dem Lande Schweiz:
Nach den heil'gen Grab sie wallen,
Auf der Brust das Kreuz.

Grosse Thaten dort geschehen
Durch der Helden Arm:
Ihres Helmes Büsche wehen
In der Feinde Schwarm:
Und des Toggenburgers Name
Schreckt den Muselman:
Doch das Herz von seinem Grame
Nicht genesen kann.

Und ein Jahr hat er's getragen,
Trägt's nicht länger mehr;
Ruhe kann er nicht erjagen
Und verlässt das Heer;
Sieht ein Schiff an Joppe's Strande
Das die Segel bläht,
Schiffet heim zum theuren Lande
Wo ihr Athem weht.

Und an ihres Schlosses Pforte
Klopft der Pilger an,
Ach, und mit dem Donnerworte
Wird sie aufgethan:
"Die ihr suchet, trägt den Schleier
Ist des Himmels Braut,
Gestern war des Tages Feier
Der sie Gott getraut."

Da verlässet er auf immer
Seiner Väter Schloss,
Seine Waffen sieht er nimmer,
Noch sein treues Ross.
Von der Toggenburg hernieder,
Steigt er unbekannt,
Denn es deckt die edeln Glieder
Härenes Gewand.

Und er baut sich eine Hütte
Jener Gegend nah.
Wo das Kloster aus der Mitte
Düstrer Linden sah:

Harrend von des Morgen's Lichte
Bis zu Abends Schein,
Stille Hoffnung im Gesichte,
Sass er da allein.

Blickte nach dem Kloster drüben
Blickte Stunden lang
Nach dem Fenster seiner Lieben,
Bis das Fenster Klang;
Bis die Liebliche sich zeigte,
Bis das theure Bild
Sich ins Thal herunter neigte,
Ruhig, Engelmild.

Und dann legt' er froh sich nieder,
Schlief getröstet ein,
Still sich freuend, wenn es wieder
Morgen würde sein.
Und so sass er viele Tage,
Sass viel' Jahre lang:
Harrend ohne Schmerz und Klage,
Bis das Fenster klang;

Bis die Liebliche sich zeigte,
Bis das theure Bild
Sich ins Thal herunter neigte,
Ruhig, Engelmild.
Und so sass er, eine Leiche,
Eines Morgens da:
Nach dem Fenster noch das bleiche
Stille Antlitz sah.

SCHILLER

Der Jungling Am Bache

An der Quelle sass ein Knabe,
Blumen wand er sich zum Kranz.
Und er sah sie fortgerissen
Treiben in der Wellen Tanz.
Und so fliehen meine Tage,
Wie die Quelle, rastlos hin!
Und so bleichet meine Jugend,
Wie die Kränze schnell verblühn.

Fraget nicht, warum ich traure
In des Lebens Blüthenzeit!
Alles freuet sich und hoffet,
Wenn der Fruhling sich erneut.
Aber diese tausend Stimmen
Der erwachenden Natur
Wecken in dem tiefen Busen
Mir den schweren Kummer nur.

Was soll mir die Freude frommen,
Die der schöne Lenz mir beut?
Eine nur ist's, die ich suche
Sie ist nah und ewig weit.
Sehnend breit' ich meine Arme
Nach dem theuren Schattenbild,
Ach, ich kann es nicht erreichen,
Und das Herz bleibt ungestillt!

Komm herab, du schöne Holde,
Und verlass dein stolzes Schloss!
Blumen, die der Lenz geboren,
Streu' ich dir in deinen Schooss.
Horch, der Hain erschallt von Liedern,
Und die Quelle rieselt klar!
Raum ist in der kleinsten Hütte
Für ein glücklich liebend Paar.

SCHILLER

Sehnsucht

Ach, aus dieses Thales Gründen,
Die der Kalte Nebel drückt,
Könnt' ich doch den Ausgang finden,
Ach, wie fühlt' ich mich beglückt!
Dort erblick' ich schöne Hügel,
Ewig jung and ewig grün!
Hätt' ich Schwingen, hätt' ich Flügel
Nach den Hügeln zog ich hin.

Harmonieen hör' ich Klingen,
Töne, süsser Himmelsruh.
Und die leichten Winde bringen
Mir der Düfte Balsam zu.
Goldne Früchte seh' ich glühen,
Winkend zwischen dunkelm Laub,
Und die Blumen, die dort blühen,
Werden keines Winters Raub.

Ach, wie schön muss sich's ergehen
Dort im ewi'gen Sonnenschein,
Und die Luft auf jenen Höhen—
O, wie labend muss sie sein!
Doch mir wehrt des stromes Toben.
Der ergrimmt dazwischen braust:
Seine Wellen sind gehoben
Dass die Seele mir ergraust.

Einen Nachen seh' ich schwanken,
Aber, ach! der Fährmann fehlt,
Frisch hinein und ohne Wanken!
Seine Segel sind beseelt.
Du musst glauben, du musst wagen,
Denn die Götter leihn kein Pfand
Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen
In das schöne Wunderland.

SCHILLER

Die Götter Griechenlands

Da ihr noch die schöne Welt regieret,
An der Fremde leichtem Gängelband
Selige Geschlechter noch gefürhet,
Schöne Wesen aus dem Fabelland!
Ach, da eurer Wonnedienst noch glänzte,
Wie ganz anders, anders war es da!
Da man deine Tempel noch bekränzte,
Venus Amathusia!

Da der Dichtung zauberische Hülle
Sich noch lieblich um die Wahrheit wand,—
Durch die Schöpfung floss da Lebensfülle,
Und was nie emfinden wird, empfand.
An der Liebe Busen sie zu drücken,
Gab man höhern Adel der Natur,
Alles wies den eingeweihten Blicken,
Alles eines Gottes Spur.

Wo jetzt nur, wie unsre Weisen sagen,
Seelenlos ein Feuerball sich dreht,
Lenkte damals seinen goldnen Wagen
Helios in stiller Majestät.
Diese Hohen füllten Oreaden,
Eine Dryas lebt' in jedem Baum,
Aus den Urnen lieblicher Najaden
Sprang der Ströme Silberschaum.

Jener Lorbeer wand sich einst um Hilfe
Tantals Tochter schweigt in diesem Stein,
Syrinx' Klage tönt' aus jenem Schilfe,
Philomelas Schmerz aus diesem Hain.
Jener Bach emfing Demeters Zähre,
Die sie um Persephonen geweint,
Und von diesem Hügel rief Cythere,
Ach, umsonst! dem schönen Freund.

Zu Deukalions Geschlechte stiegen
Damal noch die Himmlischen herab:
Pyrrhas schöne Tochter zu besiegen,
Nahm der Leto Sohn den Hirtenstab,
Zwischen Menschen, Göttern und Heroen
Knüpfte Amor einen schönen Bund,
Sterbliche mit Göttern und Heroen
Huldigten in Amathunt.

Finstrer Ernst und trauriges Entsagen
War aus eurem heitern Dienst verbannt;
Glücklich sollten alle Herzen schlagen,
Denn euch war der Glückliche verwandt.
Damals war nichts heilig als das Schöne,
Keiner Freunde schämte sich der Gott,
Wo die Keusch errötende Kamöne,
Wo die Grazie gebot.

Eure Tempel lachten gleich Palästen,
Euch verherrlichte das Heldenspiel
An des Isthmus Kronenreichen Festen,
Und die Wagen donnerten zum Ziel,

Schön geschlungne, seelenvolle Tänze,
Kreisten um den prangenden Altar,
Euer Schläfe schmückten Sieges Kränze,
Kronen eurer duftend Haar.

Das Eroe muntrer Thyrsusschwinger
Und der Panther prächtiges Gespann
Meldeten den grossen Freudebringer,
Faun und Satyr taumeln ihm voran:
Ihre Tänze loben seinen Wein,
Und des Wirtes braune Wangen laden,
Lustig zu dem Becher ein.

Damals trat kein grässliches Gerippe,
Vor das Bett des Sterbenden. Ein Kuss
Nahm das letzte Leben von der Lippe
Seine Fackel senkt' ein Genius,
Selbst des Orkus strenge Richterwage
Hielt der Enkel einer Sterblichen,
Und des Thraker's seelevolle Klage
Ruhrte die Errinnyen.

Seine Freunden traf der frohe Schatten
In Elysiens Hainen wieder an,
Treue Liebe fand den treuen Gatten
Und der Wagenlenker seine Bahn:
Linus' Spiel tönt die gewohnten Lieder,
In Alcestens Arme sinkt Admet,
Seinen Freund erkennt Orestes wieder
Seine Pfeile Philoktet.

Höhre Preise stärkten da den Ringer
Auf der Tugend Arbeitvoller Bahn;
Grosser Taten herrliche Vollbringer
Klimmten zu den Seligen hinan.
Vor dem Wiederforderer der Toten
Neigte sich der Götter stille Schar
Durch die Fluten leuchtet dem Piloten
Vom Olymp das Zwillings paar.

Schöne Welt, wo bist du?—Kehre wieder,
Holdes Blütenalter der Natur!
Ach, nur in dem Feenland der Lieder
Lebt noch deine fabelhafte Spur.
Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde,
Keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick,
Ach, von jenem lebenwarmen Bilde
Blieb der Schatten nur zurück.

Alle jenen Blüten sind gefallen,
Von des Mordes schauerlichem Wehn;
Einen zu bereichern unter allen,
Musste diese Götterwelt vergehn,
Traurig such' ich an dem Sternebogen,
Dich, Selene, find' ich dort nicht mehr;
Durch die Wälder ruf' ich, durch die Wogen,
Ach! sie wiederhallen leer!

Unbewusst der Freuden, die sie schenket,
Sie entzückt von ihrer Herrlichkeit,
Sie gewahr des Geistes, der sie lenket,
Sel'ger nie durch meine Seligkeit,

Fühllos selbst für ihres Künstlers Ehre,
Gleich dem toten Schlag der Pendeluhr.
Dient sie Knechtisch dem Gesetz der Schwere,
Die entgötterte Natur.

Morgen wieder neu sich zu entbinden
Wühlt sie heute sich ihr eignes Grab,
Und am ewig gleicher Spindel winden
Sich von selbst die Monde auf und ab,
Müssig kehrten zu dem Dichterlande,
Heim die Götter, unnutz einer Welt,
Die, entwachsen ihrem Gangelbände,
Sich durch eignes Schweben hält.

Ja, sie kehrten heim, und alles schöne,
Alles Höhe nahmen sie mit fort,
Alle Farben, alle Lebenstöne,
Und uns blieb nur das entseelte Wort,
Aus der Zeitflut weggerissen, schweben
Sie gerettet auf des Pindus Höhn;
Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben,
Muss in Leben untergehn.

SCHILLER

Schäfers Sonntagslied

Das ist der Tag des Herrn,
Ich bin allein auf weiter Flur:
Noch eine Morgenglocke nur
Nun stille nah und fern.

Anbetend knie ich hier,
O süsses Graun, geheimes Wehn,
Als knieten viele Ungesehn
Und beteten mit mir!

Der Himmel nah und fern
Er ist so klar und feuerlich,
So ganz, als wollt er öffnen sich,
Das ist der Tag des Herrn.

UHLAND

Abendlied

Ich stand auf Berges Halde
Als heim die Sonne ging,
Und sah, wie über'm Walde
Des Abends Goldnetz hing.

Des Himmels Wolken thauten
Der Erde Frieden zu,
Beim Abendglocken lauten
Ging die Natur zu Ruh.

Ich sprach: O Herz, empfinde
Der Schöpfung stille nun,
Und schick' mit jedem Kinde
Der Flur dich auch, zu ruhn.

Die Blumen alle schliessen
Die Augen allgemach,
Und alle Wellen fliessen
Besänftiget im Bach.

Nun hat der müde Sylphe
Sicho unter's Blatt gesetzt,
Und die Libell' am Schilfe
Entschlummert thaubenetzt.

Es ward dem goldenen Käfer
Zur Wieg' ein Rosenblatt:
Die Herde mit dem Schäfer
Sucht ihre Lagerstatt.

Die Lerche sucht aus Luften
Ihr feuchtes Nest im Klee,
Und in des Waldes Schluften
Ihr Lager Hirsch und Reh.

Wer sein ein Huttchen nennet
Ruht nun darin sich aus,
Und wen die Fremde trennet,
Den trägt ein Traum nach Haus.

Mich fasset ein Verlangen,
Dass ich zu dieser Frist
Hinauf nicht kann gelangen,
Wo meine Heimath ist.

RÜCKERT

Zwei Wünsche

Zwei Wünsche sind es, die mich rühren:
Dass jenseits mir zu meiner Arbeit Lohn
Die Ruhe werd', und hier mir bleib' ein Sohn
Mein unterbrochenes Wirken fortzuführen.

Dort hoff' ich, dass vom Rauch geläutert meine Flamme
Durch Ewigkeiten fort wird glühn,
Hier Zweig um Zweig von meinem Stamme
Auf Gottes schöner Erde fort wird blühn.

O Doppelewigkeit der Blume!
Wie sie berührt des Todes Hauch,
Es lebt ihr Duft im Heiligthume,
Es bliebt ihr Sam' auf Erden auch.

RÜCKERT

Die Sterbende Blume

Hoffe! du erlebst es noch.
Dass der Frühling wiederkehrt
Hoffen alle Bäume doch,
Die des Herbstes Wind verheert.
Hoffen mit der stillen Kraft
Ihrer Knospen winterlang,
Bis sich wieder regt der Saft,
Und ein neues Grün entsprang.

"Ach, ich bin kein starker Baum,
Der ein Sommertausend lebt,
Nach vertraumten Wintertraum
Neue Lenzgedichte webt.
Ach, ich bin die Blume nur,
Die des Maies Kuss geweckt,
Und von der nicht bleibt die Spur,
Wie das weisse Grab sie deckt."

Wenn du den die Blume bisst,
O bescheidenes Gemüth,
Tröste dich, beschieden ist
Samen alleon, was da blüht.
Lass den Sturm des Todes doch
Deinen Lebensstaub verstreun,
Aus dem Staube wirst du noch
Hundertmal dich selbt erneuen.

" Ja es werden nach mir blühn
Andre, die mir ähnlich sind:
Ewig ist das ganze Grün,
Nur das einzle welkt geschwind.
Aber sind sie, was ich war
Bin ich selber es nicht mehr:
Jetzt nur bin ich ganz und gar,
Nicht zuvor and nicht nachher.

Wenn einst sie der Sonne Blick
Wärmt, der jetzt noch mich durchflammt,
Lindert das nicht mein Geschick
Das mich nun zur Nacht verdammt.
Sonne, ja du äugelst schön
Ihnen in die Fernen zu:
Warum noch mit frost'gem Hohn
Mir aus Wolken lächelst du?

" Weh mir, dass ich dir vertraut,
Als mich wach geküsst dein Strahl:
Dass in's Aug' ich dir geschaut,
Bis es mir das Leben stahl;
Dieses Lebens armen Rest
Deinem Mitleid zu entziehn,
Schliessen will ich krankhaft fest
Mich in mich und dir entfliehn.

" Doch du schmelzest meines Grimms
Starres Eis in Thränen auf:
Nimm mein fliehend Leben, nimm's,
Ewige, zu dir hinauf!

Ja, du sonnest noch den Gram
Aus der Seele mir zuletzt:
Alles, was von dir mir kam,
Sterbend dank' ich dir es jezt.

" Aller Lüfte Morgenzug,
Dem ich Sommerlang gebebt,
Aller Schmetterlinge Flug,
Die um mich im Tanz geschwebt:
Augen, die mein Glanz erfrischt
Herzen, die mein Duft erfrent:
Wie aus Duft und Glanz gemischt
Du mich schufft, dir dank' ich's heut.

" Eine Zierde deiner Welt,
Wenn auch eine Kleine nur,
Liessest du mich blühn im Feld,
Wie die Stern' auf höhrer Flur.
Einen Odem hauch' ich noch,
Und es soll kein Seufzer sein;
Einen Blick zum Himmel hoch
Und zur schönen Welt hinein.

" Ewiges Flammenherz der Welt
Lass verglimmen mich an dir!
Himmel, spann dein Blaues Zelt,
Mein vergrüntes sinket hier.
Heil, O Frühling, deinem Schein!
Morgenluft, Heil deinem Wehn!
Ohne Kummer schlaf' ich ein,
Ohne Hoffnung aufzustehn."

RÜCKERT

Nachts

Ich wandre durch die stille Nacht,
Da schleicht der Mond so heimlich sacht.
Oft aus der dunkeln Wolken Hülle,
    Und hin und her im Thal
    Erwacht die Nachtigall,
Dann wieder alles grau und stille.

O Wunderbarer Nachtgesang:
Von fern im Land der Ströme Gang,
Leis Schauern in den dunkeln Bäumen—
    Wirr'st die Gedanken mir,
    Mein irres Singen hier
Ist wie ein Rufen nur aus Träumen.

EICHENDORFF

Einsamkeit

Wie eine trübe Wolke
  Durch heitre Lüfte geht
Wann in der Tanne Wipfel
  Ein mattes Lüftchen weht:

So zieh' ich meine Strasse
  Dahin mit trägem Fuss
Durch helles, frohes Leben
  Einsam und ohne Gruss.

Ach, dass die Luft so ruhig!
  Ach, dass die Welt so licht!
Ald noch die Stürme tobten,
  War ich so elend nicht.

WILHELM MÜLLER

Es ragt ins Meer der Runenstein,
Da sitz' ich mit meinen Träumen,
Es pfeift der Wind, die Möwen schrein
Die Wellen, die wandern und schäumen.

Ich habe geliebt manch schönes Kind
Und manchen guten Gesellen—
Wo sind sie hin? Es pfeift der Wind,
Es schäumen und wandern die Wellen.

HEINE

"Sag an, O lieber Vogel mein,
Sag an, wohin die Reise dein?"
Weiss nicht wohin,
Mich treibt der Sinn,
Drum muss der Pfad wohl richtig sein!

Sag an, O liebster Vogel, mir
Sag, was verspricht die Hoffnung dir?"
Ach, linde Luft
Und süssen Duft
Und neuen Lenz verspricht sie mir.

"Du hast die schöne Ferne nie
Gesehen, und du glaubst an sie?"
Du fragst mich viel,
Und das ist Spiel,
Die Antwort aber macht mir Müh'!

Nun zog in gläubig-frommem Sinn
Der Vogel über's Meer dahin,
Und linde Luft
Und süsser Duft
Sie wurden wirklich sein Gewinn.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

Im Wald, im hellen Sonnenschein,
Wenn alle Knospen springen,
Da mag ich gerne mittendrein
Eins singen.

Wie mir zu Muth in Leid und Lust,
Im Wachen und im Träumen,
Das stimm' ich an aus voller Brust
Den Bäumen.

Und sie verstehn mich gar fein,
Die Blätter alle lauschen
Und fallen am rechten Orte ein,
Mit Rauschen.

Und weiter wandelt Schall und Hall,
In Wipfeln, Fels und Buschen,
Hell schmettert auch Frau Nachtigall.
Dazwichen.

Da fühlt die Brust am eignem Klang,
Sie darf sich was erkühnen—
O frische Lust: Gesang! Gesang!
Im Grünen!

GEIBEL

In Der Fruhe

Andächtig neigen sich rings die Wipfel,
Die Lerchen sind wach und die Bergesgipfel,
Es naht sich der Tag so frisch und jung,
Mich fasst ein ahnungsvoll' Behagen,
Mir ist's, als müsst' es endlich tagen
Auch in des Busens Dämmerung.

GOTTSCHALL

Am Strande

Was schreibt die Woge in den Sand?
Sie schreibt hinein ihr bittres Leiden,
Ihr ewig Kommen, ewig Scheiden,
Die kurze Rast am theuern Strand.

Iich aber starr' ins Meer hinaus!
Mein selig Hoffen, freudig Lieben,
Ich hab' es in den Sand geschrieben:
Die nächste Welle löscht es aus.

GOTTSCHALL

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